

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

I. Amendments to the Claims

Claims 43, 48 and 59 have been amended to clarify features of the invention recited therein and to further distinguish the present invention from the reference relied upon in the rejections discussed below.

Specifically, independent claims 43 and 48 have been amended to distinguish the claimed “master router” and “slaved router” from the “master router” and “slave router” as disclosed by Kanekar.

II. 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) Rejection

Claims 43-58 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by Kanekar et al. (U.S. 6,751,191). This rejection is believed clearly inapplicable to amended independent claims 43 and 48 and the claims that depend therefrom for the following reasons.

Amended independent claim 43 recites a method of starting a first routing device connecting a plurality of networks to which a plurality of routing devices are connected. Further, claim 43 recites that master router data is stored (for each network) by each routing device and indicates whether the respective routing device is a master router or a slave router with respect to each network to which the respective routing device is connected, that with respect to each network the master router is a router that is connected to a network nearest to a

parent router that assigns the network identification data to identify the networks, and that with respect to each network the slave router is a router that is connected to a network other than the network nearest to the parent router. Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest the above-mentioned distinguishing features as recited in independent claim 43.

Rather, Kanekar merely teaches that a slave router serves as a backup device upon a failure of the master router, wherein the slave router must have the same network environment as the master router in order to be able to serve as the backup for the master router (see Figs. 3, 5, 8, 9 and 14; Abstract; and cols. 15 and 16). Specifically, Kanekar teaches that the master router and the slave router have an identical placement with relation to the networks.

Thus, in view of the above, it is clear that Kanekar teaches that the master router and the slave router have the same placement within the network environment, but fails to disclose or suggest that the master router data (stored by each router) indicates whether the respective routing device is a master router or a slave router with respect to each network to which the respective routing device is connected, as required by claim 43.

Furthermore, it is apparent that because Kanekar requires that the master router and the slave router are identically arranged in the network environment, Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest that with respect to each network, the master router is a router that is connected to a network nearest to a parent router that assigns the network identification data to identify the networks, and that with respect to each network, the slave router is a router that is connected to a network other than the network nearest to the parent router, as recited in claim 43.

Amended independent claim 43 also recites disabling a router function of the first routing device when, in relation to the networks to which the first routing device connects, a number of

detected master routers connected to any of the networks to which the first routing device connects is zero or two or more, wherein the number of detected master routers is determined based on acquired master router data received from the routers in response to a request for the master router data. Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest the above-mentioned distinguishing features as required by claim 43.

Rather, Kanekar teaches that the slave router takes over the master router upon failure of the master router (see col. 8, lines 64-66). Thus, it is apparent that Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest that, based on the number of master routers determined from the acquired master data sent in response to the request, a router function is disabled, as recited in claim 43.

Moreover, amended independent claim 43 recites disabling the first router function when a number of detected master routers connected to any of the networks to which the first routing device connects is zero or two or more, such that a loop path is prevented from forming between the first routing device and the plurality of routing devices. Kanekar fails to disclose or suggest the above-mentioned distinguishing features, as recited in claim 43.

Rather, Kanekar merely teaches an invention having a purpose of reducing a switchover time from the master router to the slave router upon failure of the slave router. Specifically, Kanekar merely teaches reducing the switchover time, but does not mention any network topology. In addition, Kanekar does not even mention preventing the formation of a loop path.

In view of the above, it is clear that Kanekar does not even mention network topology, and thus, fails to disclose or suggest disabling the first router function when a number of detected master routers connected to any of the networks to which the first routing device

connects is zero or two or more, such that a loop path is prevented from forming between the first routing device and the plurality of routing devices, as required by claim 43.

Therefore, because of the above-mentioned distinctions it is believed clear that independent claim 43 and claims 44-47 and 49-59 that depend therefrom are not anticipated by Kanekar.

Furthermore, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Kanekar or elsewhere in the prior art of record which would have caused a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Kanekar to obtain the invention of independent claim 43. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 43 and claims 44-47 and 49-59 which depend therefrom are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

Independent claim 48 recites a routing device which includes limitations that correspond to the above-mentioned distinguishing features of independent claim 43. Thus, for the same reasons discussed above, it is respectfully submitted that claim 48 is allowable over Kanekar.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection

Regarding dependent claim 59, which was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanekar, it is respectfully submitted that in view of the distinguishing features now recited in independent claim 43 and by virtue of the dependency of claim 59, Kanekar does not disclose or suggest the features required by claim 59.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Reiko UENO et al.

/Andrew L. Dunlap/

By: 2009.03.18 16:13:17 -04'00'

Andrew L. Dunlap
Registration No. 60,554
Attorney for Applicants

ALD/led
Washington, D.C. 20005-1503
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
March 18, 2009